(c) by when the final decision is to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) Pawan Hans Helicopters Limited (PHHL) is already operating passenger services to Kedarnath and Badrinath Dham twice in a year (May-June and September-October) in Uttaranchal and recently provided helicopters on lease to M/s Jagson Airlines Limited for services to Amarnath Dham. Besides, Air Deccan is also providing air services to Mata Vaishnodevi Shrine.

(c) PHHL takes decision from time to connect important tourist places etc. depending upon demand and necessary permission from the State Governments etc.

Cancellation of flights from Vishakhapatnam

817. SHRI S.M. LALJAN BASHA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Indian Airlines or Alliance Air has abruptly cancelled flights in June, 2005 from Vishakhapatnam;

(b) the number of flights which were cancelled which touch Vishakhapatnam in an abrupt manner;

(c) the reasons for such abrupt cancellations of flights using Vishakhapatnam Airport;

(d) in what way did Indian Airlines compensate passengers who had booked travel and planned journeys much ahead of time;

(e) whether Government will take steps to reduce such abrupt cancellation of flights in the future; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (c) In the month of June, 2005, five Alliance Air flights operating to/from Vishakhapatnam had to be cancelled—three due to technical snags and two due to bird hit incidents. Hence, these flights were cancelled due to the reasons beyond the control of airline.

(d) All possible assistance and facilitation was provided to the passengers of the cancelled flights including hotel accommodation and

transportation. A relief ferry flight was also operated on 26.6.2005.

(e) and (f) Do not arise due to (a), (b) and (c) above.

Pilots with AI

818. SHRI S.M. LALJAN BASHA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the number of foreign pilots recruited by Air India in the last three years;

(b) the reasons for recruiting foreign pilots by Air India;

(c) the wage and salary differentials between Indian and foreign pilots;

(d) the steps proposed to encourage Indian pilots by Air India; and

(e) the number of Indian pilots presently on the payroll of Air India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) Air India has recruited 27 foreign pilots on contract during the last 3 years due to shortage of qualified pilots on various aircraft types.

(c) Foreign pilots are inducted purely on contract basis for a period of one year on fixed salary exclusive of any other facilities being given to Indian Pilots who are on regular pay roll of Air India. The salaries offered to Indian pilots are in range of Rs. 3 lakhs to Rs. 5 lakhs p.m. (including allowances), whereas the foreign pilots are being paid consolidatd salary from Rs. 2.61 lakhs to Rs. 4.00 lakhs p.m. depending on the aircraft being operated by them.

(d) Air India is offering attractive packages to the Indian pilots with job security. Besides this, Air India has taken various steps to overcome shortage by resorting to large scale induction of *ab initio* pilots by recruiting pilots every 3 to 4 months and training has been given highest priority to ensure that Air India has adequate number of trained Indian pilots to replace foreign pilots.

(e) 490 Indian pilots are presently on the pay roll of Air India including trainee pilots and pilots on contract.